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Sustainable development

Implementation of World Wildlife Day

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/205, the Secretary-General hereby transmits the report prepared by the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

* A/71/150.

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I. Background

1. The world's wildlife, whether well known or obscure, is facing many threats and challenges. The greatest threats to wildlife are habitat loss, overgrazing, farming and unsustainable patterns of development. Nevertheless, poaching and trafficking in wildlife, driven by transnational organized crime groups, pose the most immediate threat to many iconic species, including elephants, pangolins, rhinoceros, sharks, tigers and precious tree species.

2. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora is an international agreement between Governments. Its aim is to ensure that the international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. In paragraph 203 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want" (see General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex), Member States recognized the continued importance of the Convention in promoting the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the economic, social and environmental impacts of the illicit trafficking in wildlife:

> We recognize the important role of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, an international agreement that stands at the intersection between trade, the environment and development, promotes the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, should contribute to tangible benefits for local people and ensures that no species entering into international trade is threatened with extinction. We recognize the economic, social and environmental impacts of illicit trafficking in wildlife, where firm and strengthened action needs to be taken on both the supply and demand sides. In this regard, we emphasize the importance of effective international cooperation among relevant multilateral environmental agreements and international organizations. We further stress the importance of basing the listing of species on agreed criteria.

3. In considering that the establishment of a World Wildlife Day would help to provide a useful means of promoting international and national actions in the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife and of raising public awareness, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, at its 16th meeting, held in Bangkok in 2013, unanimously adopted resolution Conf. 16.1. In the resolution, the Conference of the Parties declared 3 March, the day in 1973 on which the Convention was signed, as World Wildlife Day. In the same resolution, the Conference of the Parties invited the General Assembly to consider declaring 3 March as World Wildlife Day.

4. The General Assembly, at its sixty-eighth session, adopted resolution 68/205, in which it proclaimed 3 March as World Wildlife Day. In the resolution, the Assembly requested the secretariat of the Convention, in collaboration with relevant organizations of the United Nations system, to facilitate the implementation of World Wildlife Day, which it has done for each of the three observances of the day held to date, within its existing financial resources.

II. Observance of World Wildlife Day in 2014, 2015 and 2016

Inaugural World Wildlife Day 2014

5. In preparation for the launch of the inaugural World Wildlife Day in 2014, the secretariat of the Convention commissioned a graphic designer to create a dedicated logo, which was subsequently translated into the six official languages of the United Nations (see annex to the present report). The logo is used to brand the initiatives undertaken to celebrate World Wildlife Day and to help to inspire worldwide celebrations.

6. A website dedicated to World Wildlife Day was developed by the secretariat to raise awareness and to provide all relevant background information, outreach materials, official statements and relevant links and information from partners. The secretariat also created dedicated channels for the Day on the main social media platforms to maximize the reach of the celebrations. In addition, it produced a brochure for the celebration of the inaugural World Wildlife Day.

7. The inaugural World Wildlife Day was launched at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 3 March 2014 by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The event was attended by the then President of the Swiss Confederation, Didier Burkhalter; the then Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Hugo Swire; the Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations Office at Geneva, Thani Thongphakdi; the Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, John E. Scanlon; and the founding President of the Goodplanet Foundation, Yann Arthus-Bertrand. An exhibition of photos by celebrated wildlife photographers was held at the same venue to coincide with the launch of the Day.

8. In his message for the inaugural World Wildlife Day, the Secretary-General of the United Nations highlighted the environmental, economic and social consequences of wildlife crime and urged all sectors of society to end illegal wildlife trafficking and commit themselves to trading and using wild plants and animals sustainably and equitably. The Secretary-General of the Convention and many others also released a short video statement on the Day.

9. The secretariat received more than 50 messages of support from United Nations organizations, other intergovernmental organizations, multilateral environmental agreements, non-governmental organizations and celebrities, all of which were posted on the World Wildlife Day website.

10. The Permanent Missions of Germany and Thailand to the United Nations in New York organized a side event on the occasion of World Wildlife Day at Headquarters, to which the Secretary-General of the Convention had provided a video message.

11. Countries and people around the world embraced World Wildlife Day in various ways, exceeding all expectations, in particular given that there were only two months in which to undertake preparations after the adoption on 20 December 2013 of General Assembly resolution 68/205, in which the Assembly proclaimed 3 March as World Wildlife Day. The celebrations included wildlife art exhibitions, a symposium on wildlife conservation, a televised talk show, a street parade, the

issuance of stamps, an open-door concert, painting competitions, a wildlife awareness contest, the release of captive animals to the wild, the appointment of wildlife ambassadors and the launch of a new campaign against wildlife trafficking.

World Wildlife Day 2015

12. At the request of the secretariat, and in order to actively involve parties and observers in the process, a World Wildlife Day working group was established at the 65th meeting of its Standing Committee in order to identify, compile and formulate ideas on how best to celebrate future editions of the Day.

13. The members of the working group are: Bahrain, Botswana (Chair), Brazil, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guyana, Italy, Kuwait, Peru, Portugal, South Africa, Thailand, Uganda and the United States of America, as well as the Convention on Migratory Species, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Fund for Animal Welfare, Species Survival Network, TRAFFIC and the Wildlife Conservation Society. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Tourism Organization joined the working group at a later date. The secretariat thanks the Chair and all members of the working group for their support.

14. For the second observance of World Wildlife Day, the theme introduced in consultation with the working group was "It's time to get serious about wildlife crime". In addition, the working group agreed to adopt the logo produced for World Wildlife Day in 2014 as the official logo for the celebration in 2015.

15. In his statement for World Wildlife Day 2015, the Secretary-General of the United Nations highlighted that:

> Illegal wildlife trade undermines the rule of law and threatens national security; it degrades ecosystems and is a major obstacle to the efforts of rural communities and indigenous peoples striving to sustainably manage their natural resources. Combating this crime is not only essential for conservation efforts and sustainable development, it will contribute to achieving peace and security in troubled regions where conflicts are fuelled by these illegal activities.

The Secretary-General of the Convention and many others also released a short video statement on the Day. The then President of the General Assembly hosted a special commemorative session at Headquarters on 4 March, at which Member States and the global community examined the challenges to and opportunities for stepping up international efforts to combat wildlife crime on a global scale. The then President of the General Assembly, the Deputy Secretary-General, Chelsea Clinton, actress Nadya Hutagalung and the Secretary-General of the Convention were on the panel.

16. More than 100 representatives of Member States, development organizations, civil society, the private sector and the media attended an event at the Central Park Zoo in New York. The event included statements by high-level speakers and a moderated panel discussion. Welcoming remarks were provided by the Director for Sustainable Development at UNDP, Nik Sekhran, and the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Wildlife Conservation Society, Cristián Samper. Joint remarks were offered by the then Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of

Gabon to the United Nations, Marianne Bibalou, the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, Harald Braun, and the then Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Thailand to the United Nations, Chayapan Bamrungphong. Opening remarks were given by the Secretary-General of the Convention and the then President of the United Nations Environment Assembly, Oyun Sanjaasuren. The panel discussion explored the links between the illegal wildlife trade, crime and sustainable development. The European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu Vella, offered a video statement to recognize the importance of addressing wildlife crime. Several public service announcements demonstrated the power of celebrity voices and highlighted the plights of elephants, great apes and other species. The secretariat expressed its appreciation to the Wildlife Conservation Society for hosting the event and to all Member States and organizations for their participation.

17. The secretariat, in association with the Geneva Environment Network, International Geneva, the Geneva Airport, the Natural History Museum of Geneva and the newspaper *Le Temps*, and with the generous support of the Swiss Confederation and the Embassy of the United States of America, organized a symposium on the occasion of World Wildlife Day 2015 under the theme "Wild and precious: conservation in the twenty-first century".

18. On 3 March, the secretariat and relevant organizations in the United Nations system issued a joint press release on World Wildlife Day.

19. UNODC generously contributed by developing a full social media campaign package to raise awareness of the scope and severity of wildlife crime, in close cooperation with the secretariat and the working group. The package was also picked up by other United Nations and non-United Nations organizations. The hashtags used on social media were #SeriousAboutWildlifeCrime, #WorldWildlifeDay and #WildlifeCrime. The campaign was a great success, with a combined reach of close to 190 million people.

20. The celebration of World Wildlife Day 2015 around the world under the theme "It's time to get serious about wildlife crime" helped to further pave the way for the adoption of General Assembly resolution 69/314 on tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife, in which the Assembly welcomed the international observance of the Day.

World Wildlife Day 2016

21. The third World Wildlife Day was celebrated under the theme "The future of wildlife is in our hands", with the sub-theme "The future of elephants is in our hands". The themes were once again chosen in consultation with the working group and reinforced the inextricable link between wildlife, people and sustainable development. The themes conveyed the message that human beings hold the future of all wildlife in their hands and that failure to take action will have immediate, sometimes devastating, consequences for species of animals and plants. The sub-theme gives recognition to the serious challenges facing African and Asian elephants.

22. A new World Wildlife Day website with a powerful and appealing interface and rich content was created by the secretariat in collaboration with a designer recruited through the United Nations Volunteers programme. The website offers

suggestions to the general public on ways to become involved and to support the celebration of the Day and provides a user-friendly way for countries, organizations and private individuals to register events online. It also provides various materials, including posters, logos, shout-out cards, powerful short videos (public service announcements) and social media kits for use in their celebrations.

23. While continuing to organize high-level events, the secretariat began to place greater focus on further mobilizing countries and people around the world to embrace and celebrate World Wildlife Day at the national level by reaching out to specific countries and organizing colourful and participatory activities in order to reach a wider audience.

24. Events in 80 countries were registered on the World Wildlife Day website, ranging from a lecture on wildlife conservation in a primary school near the Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda to a high-level event at the State Department in Washington, D.C. There has been a considerable increase in the number of events since 2015, reflecting how rapidly the international community has embraced the Day.

25. More than 160 powerful films were entered into the International Elephant Film Festival, which was organized jointly by the secretariat and the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival as part of the activities to celebrate World Wildlife Day. The winners in seven categories were announced on 3 March at Headquarters. The film festival greatly amplified the global calls to stop the poaching of elephants and the illicit trafficking in elephant ivory.

26. More than 320 inspirational posters were submitted for the World Wildlife Day poster design competition, organized jointly by the secretariat and the Department of Environmental Affairs of South Africa, which sponsored the competition. The three winners will be awarded flight tickets for travel to Johannesburg, South Africa, to attend the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in September 2016.

27. The social media campaign was a great success. The hashtags #WorldWildlifeDay, #WWD2016 and #InOurHands in the English language alone attained a reach of 667 million impressions in only four days, representing an increase of close to 300 per cent compared with the previous year. While UNODC had led the social media campaign in 2015, the social media team of UNEP led the campaign in 2016, and provided generous support, as did other United Nations system organizations and other entities in promoting the celebration of World Wildlife Day on their own platforms.

28. Representatives of Governments, United Nations system organizations and other intergovernmental organizations, civil society, community-based groups and others gathered in The Hague, the Netherlands, to address the global challenge of wildlife crime at an international conference hosted by the Government of the Netherlands on the theme "Save wildlife: act now or game over". The Secretary-General of the Convention gave a keynote address at the event.

29. In addition, World Wildlife Day 2016 saw the European Union launch its new action plan to combat the illegal wildlife trade and major private companies pledge to crack down on wildlife trafficking.

30. On 3 March, the secretariat provided the latest update, through a press release, on trends in the illegal killing of elephants in 2015. According to data from Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants, poaching levels continued to pose an immediate risk to the survival of African elephants, with overall poaching trends in 2015 showing the Africa-wide elephant populations still in decline.

31. The celebration of World Wildlife Day 2016 reached its climax at United Nations Headquarters, where more than 400 participants representing Governments, the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations, civil society, wildlife filmmakers and celebrities gathered to celebrate the Day and to address the various challenges confronting both wildlife and people in the wider context of sustainable development. During the event, the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat announced the imminent launch of the "One United Nations" campaign on the illegal wildlife trade. The Secretary-General of the Convention facilitated a high-level panel session, which included representatives of the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, UNDP, the Wildlife Conservation Society and the World Wildlife Fund, as well as an interaction with people from the audience, including the UNEP Goodwill Ambassador, Gisele Bündchen, and the well-known actress and conservationist Kristin Davis. UNDP played a leading role in organizing the event.

32. In his message for World Wildlife Day 2016, the Secretary-General of the United Nations warned that time was running out to save some of the world's most iconic species and that much more needed to be done by key actors on all continents and across sectors to combat poaching and address both the demand and supply of illegal wildlife products. The Secretary-General of the Convention and many others also released a short video statement.

III. Impact of World Wildlife Day

Raising public awareness

33. World Wildlife Day, as a new international day on the United Nations calendar, has been embraced immediately by countries, United Nations organizations and people around the world. Governments and international and national wildlife conservation organizations have used this unique opportunity to raise awareness of wildlife conservation among the general public. The various ways in which the Day has been observed, including wildlife art exhibitions, a symposium on wildlife conservation, televised talk shows, street parades, the issuance of stamps, open-door concerts, painting competitions, wildlife awareness contests, the release of captive animals to the wild, the appointment of wildlife ambassadors, the launch of a new campaign against the trafficking in wildlife, film festivals and poster competitions, have had a huge impact on people around the world.

34. In this regard, China's activities represent solid examples of highly successful national celebrations. Given that it is the world's most populous nation and that it is a megadiversity country, China, with its unique culture and tradition, also faces many challenges in wildlife conservation. The Government of China has joined the international community in observing World Wildlife Day since 2014, and the celebrations have been carried out on a nationwide scale and have had an impact.

Since 2014, the State Forestry Administration, the Management Authority on the Convention and the China Wildlife Conservation Association have jointly called on every province to observe the Day, and all provinces have responded positively each year. In 2016, the Day was celebrated in 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities in China. Public-awareness activities were carried out across the country, including symposiums and outdoor concerts and were promoted on street banners, television, the radio and the Internet.

35. In the age of the Internet, World Wildlife Day has become a social media phenomenon. Social media offers the most efficient and cost-effective way to promote the themes and messages related to the Day. Millions of people are joining the social media campaign each year. United Nations organizations, Governments, international and national conservation organizations, media organizations and sports and entertainment celebrities are all joining and supporting the social media campaign. A single public service announcement produced by UNODC on wildlife crime for World Wildlife Day 2016 was shared thousands of times in one day.

36. World Wildlife Day is fast becoming the biggest annual event on wildlife at the global level. Given that the young generation represents the future, efforts are now being made to encourage all countries around the world to make the observance of the Day an annual event in all schools and universities.

New opportunity for dialogue, partnership and cooperation

37. World Wildlife Day triggers discussions on the challenges facing wildlife and the concrete measures that should be taken by Governments and citizens to protect and sustainably use wildlife. New partnerships and cooperation are forged on the Day among countries and organizations.

Sparking political will and concrete actions

38. The theme of World Wildlife Day 2015 greatly raised awareness that the poaching of and trafficking in some of the world's most iconic species is often driven by transnational organized criminal groups, with an annual value up to $20 billion, ranking it among other serious transnational crimes, such as the trafficking in people and arms. The theme and the high-level event held at Headquarters helped to pave the way for the adoption by the General Assembly on 30 July 2015 of historic resolution 69/314, on tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife.

39. In order to benefit from the impact of World Wildlife Day, Governments and conservation organizations have launched wildlife conservation campaigns and other important events on the Day. For example, Malawi launched its first high-profile campaign tackling wildlife crime on World Wildlife Day 2014 and the Netherlands organized an international conference on wildlife crime on World Wildlife Day 2016 in The Hague.

IV. Conclusion

40. The proclamation by the General Assembly of World Wildlife Day as an official United Nations international day has been welcomed by the world's

Governments and the wildlife conservation community. In the space of only three years, it is fast becoming the most important annual event in wildlife conservation at the global level. Furthermore, many international, regional and national events are being organized to coincide with the Day. The numerous events worldwide and the large number of people involved have demonstrated that the designation of the Day has been very timely, if not long overdue, and warmly welcomed around the world.

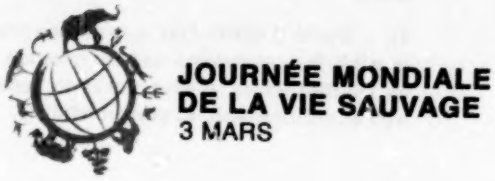
41. World Wildlife Day contributes greatly to the promotion of public awareness in wildlife conservation and the creation of opportunities for discussion and debate on wildlife issues. It also serves to generate new partnerships and cooperation, as well as political will, to protect wildlife.

Annex

Logo of World Wildlife Day

Arabic

French



Chinese

Russian

English

Spanish

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Items 19 (d), (e) and (f) of the provisional agenda*

Sustainable development: protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind

Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

Convention on Biological Diversity

Implementation of United Nations environmental conventions

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the reports submitted by the secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

* A/71/150.

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I. Report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the United Nations Climate Change Conference, Paris, 2015

A. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, by its resolution 70/205 of 22 December 2015, invited the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to report, through the Secretary-General, to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. The present report has been prepared in response to that invitation.

B. Outcomes of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties and the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol

1. Summary

2. The United Nations Climate Change Conference was held in Paris from 30 November to 13 December 2015 and comprised the following sessions:

(a) The twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;

(b) The eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol;

(c) The forty-third session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation;

(d) The forty-third session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice;

(e) The twelfth part of the second session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action.

3. The United Nations Climate Change Conference had the highest level of participation of all United Nations climate change conferences to date. It was attended by 19,260 government delegates, 8,314 observers and 2,798 media representatives.

4. It delivered significant results across all bodies: the Conference of the Parties to the Convention adopted 23 decisions and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol adopted 12 decisions.

5. The main outcome of the Conference was the adoption of the Paris Agreement, which, together with the accompanying decision (decision 1/CP.21), contains a structure of provisions that will allow parties to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty.

6. The main elements laid out in the Paris Agreement are:

(a) A long-term temperature goal (article 2): to limit the global temperature increase to well below 2°C, while pursuing efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C;

(b) A global peaking of emissions (article 4): to achieve the temperature goal, parties aim to reach a global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible, recognizing that peaking will take longer for developing country parties, so as to achieve a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources, and removals by sinks, of greenhouse gases in the second half of the century;

(c) Mitigation (article 4): establishes binding commitments by all parties to prepare, communicate and maintain successive nationally determined contributions and to pursue domestic measures to achieve them. It also prescribes that parties shall communicate such contributions every five years and provide information necessary for clarity and transparency. To set a firm foundation for higher ambition, each successive nationally determined contribution will represent a progression beyond the previous one and reflect the highest possible ambition. Developed countries should continue to take the lead by undertaking absolute economy-wide reduction targets, while developing countries should continue to enhance their mitigation efforts and are encouraged to move towards economy-wide targets over time in the light of different national circumstances;

(d) Sinks and reservoirs (article 5): encourages parties to conserve and enhance, as appropriate, sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases as referred to in article 4, paragraph 1 (d), of the Convention, including forests;

(e) Market and non-market approaches (article 6): establishes a mechanism to contribute to the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and support sustainable development and defines a framework for non-market approaches to sustainable development;

(f) Adaptation (article 7): establishes a global goal to significantly strengthen national adaptation efforts — enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change — through support and international cooperation. The Agreement also recognizes that adaptation is a global challenge faced by all. All parties should submit and update periodically an adaptation communication on their priorities, implementation and support needs, plans and actions. Developing country parties will receive enhanced support for adaptation actions;

(g) Loss and damage (article 8): significantly enhances the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts, which will develop approaches to help vulnerable countries cope with the adverse effects of climate change, including extreme weather events and slow-onset events such as sea-level rise. The Agreement provides a framework for parties to enhance understanding, action and support with regard to loss and damage;

(h) Support (articles 9, 10 and 11): reaffirms the obligations of developed country parties to support the efforts of developing country parties to build clean, climate-resilient futures, while for the first time encouraging voluntary contributions by other parties. The provision of resources should also aim to achieve a balance between adaptation and mitigation. In addition to reporting on financing already provided, developed country parties commit to submitting indicative information on future support every two years, including on projected levels of public financing. The Agreement also provides that the financial mechanism of the Convention, including the Green Climate Fund, shall serve as the financial mechanism of the Agreement. International cooperation on climate-safe technology

development and transfer and building capacity in the developing world are also strengthened: a technology framework is established under the Agreement and capacity-building activities will be enhanced through, inter alia, enhanced support for capacity-building actions in developing countries and appropriate institutional arrangements;

(i) Transparency (article 13): a robust transparency and accounting system to provide clarity on action and support by parties, with flexibility for their differing capabilities. In addition to reporting information on mitigation, adaptation and support, the Agreement requires that the information submitted by each party undergo international review. The Agreement also includes a mechanism that will facilitate implementation and promote compliance in a non-adversarial and non-punitive manner, and will report annually to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;

(j) A global stocktake (article 14): to take place in 2023 and every five years thereafter, which will assess collective progress towards meeting the purpose of the Agreement in a comprehensive and facilitative manner. Its outcomes will inform Parties in updating and enhancing their actions and support, and enhancing international cooperation;

(k) Decision 1/CP.21 also sets out a number of measures to enhance action prior to 2020, including the strengthening of the technical examination process, enhancement of provision of urgent financing, technology and support, and measures to strengthen high-level engagement;

(l) Regarding non-party stakeholders, decision 1/CP.21 also welcomes their efforts to address and respond to climate change, including those of civil society, the private sector, financial institutions, cities and other subnational authorities. These stakeholders were requested to scale up their efforts and showcase them via the Non-State Actor Zone for Climate Action platform.[1] Parties also recognized the need to strengthen the knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts of local communities and indigenous peoples, as well as the important role of providing incentives through tools such as domestic policies and carbon pricing;

(m) In the Paris Agreement and its accompanying decision, parties emphasized the relevance and importance of the interlinkages between climate change and human rights;

(n) On the topic of gender equality and the empowerment of women, parties acknowledged, in the preamble to both decision 1/CP.21 and the Paris Agreement, that when taking action to address climate change, they should respect, promote and consider their respective obligations in relation to, among others, gender equality and the empowerment of women. This human-rights-based language is a first for multilateral environmental agreements. Additionally, gender-responsive action is referred to in articles 7 and 11 of the Agreement in relation to adaptation action and capacity-building, respectively.

7. The proceedings of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as

[1] See http://climateaction.unfccc.int.

the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and a complete list of decisions adopted at the sessions are included in the reports on the sessions.[2]

2. Leaders Event

8. A Leaders Event for Heads of State and Government was convened on 30 November at the invitation of the President of France and the President of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

9. The event was opened with statements by the President of France, the Secretary-General and the President of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. During the event, statements were also presented by 142 parties at the level of Heads of State and Government, Vice-Presidents and Deputy Prime Ministers.[3]

3. High-level segment

10. The joint high-level segment of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol was opened by the President of both sessions.

11. The President, the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session, the Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC delivered statements at the opening of the high-level segment.[4]

12. During the high-level segment, statements were made by 112 parties, of which two were delivered by Heads of State or Government, 2 by either Vice-Presidents or Deputy Prime Ministers and 108 by ministers and representatives of parties.[5]

4. Outcomes of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties

13. In addition to the Paris Agreement, at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, parties took a number of significant decisions:

(a) 2/CP.21: Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts;

(b) 3/CP.21: Report of the Adaptation Committee;

(c) 4/CP.21: National adaptation plans;

(d) 5/CP.21: Long-term climate finance;

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[2] FCCC/CP/2015/10 and Add.1-3, and FCCC/KP/CMP/2015/8 and Add.1 and 2.

[3] The text of statements made during the Leaders Event are available at http://unfccc.int/meetings/paris_nov_2015/items/9331.php.

[4] The text of statements made during the opening of the joint high-level segment are available at http://unfccc.int/meetings/paris_nov_2015/items/9333.php.

[5] The text of statements made during the high-level segment are available at http://unfccc.int/meetings/paris_nov_2015/items/9345.php.

(e) 6/CP.21: Report of the Standing Committee on Finance;

(f) 7/CP.21: Report of the Green Climate Fund to the Conference of the Parties and guidance to the Green Climate Fund;

(g) 8/CP.21: Report of the Global Environment Facility to the Conference of the Parties and guidance to the Global Environment Facility;

(h) 9/CP.21: Methodologies for the reporting of financial information by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention;

(i) 10/CP.21: The 2013-2015 review;

(j) 11/CP.21: Forum and work programme on the impact of the implementation of response measures;

(k) 12/CP.21: Enhancing climate technology development and transfer through the Technology Mechanism;

(l) 13/CP.21: Linkages between the Technology Mechanism and the Financial Mechanism of the Convention;

(m) 14/CP.21: Capacity-building under the Convention;

(n) 15/CP.21: Terms of reference for the intermediate review of the Doha work programme on Article 6 of the Convention;

(o) 16/CP.21: Alternative policy approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests;

(p) 17/CP.21: Further guidance on ensuring transparency, consistency, comprehensiveness and effectiveness when informing on how all the safeguards referred to in decision 1/CP.16, appendix I, are being addressed and respected;

(q) 18/CP.21: Methodological issues related to non-carbon benefits resulting from the implementation of the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70;

(r) 19/CP.21: Extension of the mandate of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group;

(s) 20/CP.21: Technical review in 2016 of greenhouse gas inventories from Parties included in Annex I to the Convention;

(t) 21/CP.21: Administrative, financial and institutional matters;

(u) 22/CP.21: Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017;

(v) 23/CP.21: Dates and venue of future sessions.

5. Outcomes of the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol

14. At the Paris Conference, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol also took a number of important decisions:

(a) 1/CMP.11: Report of the Adaptation Fund Board;

(b) 2/CMP.11: Clarification of the text in section G (Article 3, paragraph 7 ter) of the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol;

(c) 3/CMP.11: Implications of the implementation of decisions 2/CMP.7 to 4/CMP.7 and 1/CMP.8 on the previous decisions on methodological issues related to the Kyoto Protocol, including those relating to Articles 5, 7 and 8 of the Kyoto Protocol, part I: implications related to accounting and reporting and other issues;

(d) 4/CMP.11: Implications of the implementation of decisions 2/CMP.7 to 4/CMP.7 and 1/CMP.8 on the previous decisions on methodological issues related to the Kyoto Protocol, including those relating to Articles 5, 7 and 8 of the Kyoto Protocol, part II: implications related to review and adjustments and other related issues;

(e) 5/CMP.11: Training programme for members of expert review teams participating in annual reviews under Article 8 of the Kyoto Protocol;

(f) 6/CMP.11: Guidance relating to the clean development mechanism;

(g) 7/CMP.11: Guidance on the implementation of Article 6 of the Kyoto Protocol;

(h) 8/CMP.11: Methodology for the collection of international transaction log fees in the biennium 2016-2017;

(i) 9/CMP.11: Capacity-building under the Kyoto Protocol;

(j) 10/CMP.11: Technical review in 2016 of greenhouse gas inventories and initial reports for the second commitment period from Parties included in Annex I to the Convention that are also Parties to the Kyoto Protocol;

(k) 11/CMP.11: Administrative, financial and institutional matters;

(l) Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

15. The General Assembly may wish, inter alia:

(a) To take note of the report of the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, as transmitted by the Secretary-General;

(b) To note the outcomes of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol;

(c) To urge parties to the Kyoto Protocol to deposit their instruments of acceptance in order to ensure the prompt entry into force of the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol;

(d) To urge UNFCCC Parties to sign and ratify the Paris Agreement and deposit their instruments of ratification;

(e) To invite the Executive Secretary to continue to report to it on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

II. Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 70/206 on the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

A. Introduction

16. In its resolution 70/206, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the resolution at its seventy-first session. The present report constitutes an update to the Assembly on the principal activities that have been undertaken in that respect.

B. Implementation of resolution 70/206

1. Major outcomes of the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification relevant to the General Assembly

17. The twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification convened in Ankara from 12 to 23 October 2015. The subsidiary bodies of the Conference, namely the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and the Committee on Science and Technology held their fourteenth and twelfth sessions respectively during that period.

18. The Committee on Science and Technology forwarded recommendations to the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties on the outcomes of the Convention's third Scientific Conference, notably improving the efficiency of the Committee on Science and Technology; improving knowledge dissemination and the work programme of the Science-Policy Interface.

19. Similarly, the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention forwarded recommendations for consideration by the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties on eight issues that included: collaboration with the Global Environment Facility (GEF); establishment of voluntary land degradation neutrality targets within national action programmes and national reports, including funding to support national level target-setting towards achieving land degradation neutrality; measures to achieve the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention; procedures for communication of information to be submitted to the Conference; progress indicators for trends in land cover, land productivity and carbon stocks.

20. In a landmark decision, the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties adopted a set of progress indicators to assess trends in land cover, land productivity and carbon stocks that could be used by parties for reporting to the three Rio Conventions and encouraged further work by the secretariat on the harmonization of indicators and reporting procedures.

21. The twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties also deliberated on the scope of the Convention and noted that a significant proportion of land degradation

occurs beyond arid, semi-arid and dry subhumid areas. It also recognized that parties may use the Convention to guide their policies relating to desertification, land degradation and drought. The Conference agreed that striving to achieve target 15.3 of Sustainable Development Goal 15 on land degradation neutrality was a strong vehicle for driving implementation of the Convention. The Conference also endorsed a science-based definition of land degradation neutrality as a "state whereby the amount and quality of land resources necessary to support ecosystem functions and services and enhance food security remain stable or increase within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems". It invited country parties to formulate national voluntary targets to achieve land degradation neutrality in accordance with their specific national circumstances and development priorities and to explore options on how to integrate them in their national action programmes as part of their implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Conference also mandated the development of options to increase incentives and financial support for desertification, land degradation and drought activities and the implementation of land degradation neutrality initiatives, including through the possible creation of an independent fund for that purpose.

22. The Ankara Initiative, which was launched at the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties, is also of relevance in this context. Through that initiative, Turkey and GEF announced that additional funding of €5.5 million would be made available for the establishment of voluntary national land degradation neutrality targets. In this context, as at July 2016, approximately 100 countries had committed to the land degradation neutrality target-setting exercise.

23. Parties also addressed the need for possible changes to the reporting and review process in the light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and decided to make the national reporting due in 2016 optional. The twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties decided to convene a special intersessional meeting of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention with a mandate to focus on the periodicity and methodological issues relating to the national reporting cycle. The fifteenth session of the Committee is scheduled to be held in Nairobi in October 2016.

24. During the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties, a special high-level segment was convened on 20 and 21 October 2015 that included three parallel ministerial/high-level round tables and three interactive dialogue sessions. The President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, inaugurated the special high-level segment.

25. Round table 1 discussed the theme "From global to local: translating land degradation neutrality into action". Ministers noted that land degradation neutrality was a new paradigm for sustainable development that would require policy measures based on science, with indicators that could be monitored. They noted that land degradation neutrality was a universally applicable target that had the potential to create jobs and economic opportunity for local communities in the long run.

26. The second round table focused on the theme "Drought adaptation: mainstreaming drought management policy in national agendas and mitigating the effects of drought". Ministers stressed that combating drought was one of the most important issues for the Convention and discussed practical policy options to tackle drought, ranging from the need to integrate drought management at the basin level,

making best use of indigenous knowledge, to developing cutting-edge technology, community mobilization and enhancing the capacities of drought-prone countries.

27. Round table 3 discussed the theme "Land-based approaches to climate change: resilience through sustainable land management". It noted that climate change, the loss of ecosystems and land degradation could not be addressed in isolation from one another. Comprehensive solutions were therefore urgently needed, especially for the rural poor living in drylands.

28. The high-level segment also included dialogues with civil society organizations and parliamentarians. An open dialogue session was held on 15 October 2015 with civil society organizations, at which a declaration was adopted. The eleventh round table of members of Parliament was held on 20 and 21 October 2015 and adopted a declaration entitled "The role of members of Parliament in the efforts to combat desertification/land degradation and drought: framing of legislation to protect and rehabilitate land in the context of strengthened resilience to climate change".

2. Linkages between desertification, land degradation and drought, and forced migration, instability and conflicts

29. Against the backdrop of growing recognition, as noted in General Assembly resolution 70/206, that combating desertification, land degradation and drought could contribute to easing migration flows and reduce current and potential competition over scarce natural resources in degraded areas, the Executive Secretary of the Convention was invited by the President of the Security Council to deliver a briefing to the Council on 26 May 2016 on the theme "Peace and security in Africa: challenges in the Sahel region". The Council had convened the briefing with the objective of gaining a better understanding of the potential impact of climate change in the Sahel and its security implications, particularly the destabilizing effects that might exacerbate the traditional drivers of conflict in the Sahel region. In her address, the Executive Secretary pointed out that climate change was expected to accelerate the degradation of the natural resource base — land — on which 80 per cent of the population of the Sahel currently depended for survival, while projected global warming was expected to make matters worse in the Sahel by reducing agricultural production.

30. The Executive Secretary referred to her recent visit to northern Niger, to Agadez and Dirkou, cities which had metamorphosed from tourist hotspots and trading centres to major migrant transit points, through which more than 150,000 people pass each year.

31. Given the crucial significance of productive land and agriculture in the Sahel, the Executive Secretary urged investment in land rehabilitation in each of the front-line villages and communities. She pointed out that such a land-based approach would prove more cost-effective in delivering multiple benefits, including income generation, economic growth, strengthening of the resilience of local communities, enhancement of food and water security and, above all, stabilization of much of the region.

3. Follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

32. To follow up on the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Convention secretariat has been working closely with the United Nations Statistical Division and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators in providing metadata on an indicator for target 15.3 of Sustainable Development Goal 15.

33. In February 2016, the Convention secretariat and its partners convened a meeting with over 60 experts from organizations, institutions, Governments and the private sector to discuss the methodologies and data sets needed to monitor progress towards target 15.3 of Sustainable Development Goal 15. The discussions focused on how to deliver on global indicator 15.3.1 ("Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area") agreed to at the forty-seventh session of the United Nations Statistical Commission. There was a general consensus on the use of three sub-indicators: (a) land cover; (b) land productivity; and (c) carbon stocks above and below ground.

34. In May 2016, the Convention secretariat convened an inter-agency advisory group on indicator 15.3.1 of Sustainable Development Goal 15 to develop a detailed workplan with the aim of producing a complete methodology package with data options for the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators in early 2017. The secretariat, in consultation with the group, has contracted a team of international experts to produce good practice guidance for deriving indicator 15.3.1, including a standardized approach to data options at the national, regional and global levels. A comprehensive metadata document will be presented to the Inter-Agency and Expert Group for its review in early 2017.

35. The Convention secretariat has now begun a process of transforming its existing databases in order to collect data from national statistical systems for the purposes of reporting on indicator 15.3.1 and providing a storyline for the annual global Sustainable Development Goals progress report. The secretariat is also helping parties to build capacities at the national level focused on implementing and monitoring target 15.3 of Sustainable Development Goal 15, including national target setting.

4. Collaboration with the Global Environment Facility

36. With the adoption of the land degradation neutrality target as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Convention and GEF secretariats pursed their consultations in the context of this new paradigm. The Executive Secretary attended the GEF Council held in Washington, D.C., in June 2016. In her address to the Council, the Executive Secretary highlighted the fact that land and its ecosystems were increasingly recognized as an important asset for sustainable development, including for climate action. In this respect, she encouraged the international community to invest more in addressing land degradation and called for securing a larger share of GEF investments, particularly at its upcoming seventh replenishment.

5. Global celebration of World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought

37. Celebrated under the theme "Protect Earth. Restore land. Engage people", the global observance event for World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought was

held on 17 June 2016 in Beijing. Hosted by the State Forestry Administration in the presence of the Vice-Premier of China and a number of ministers from various countries, the global celebration also featured the participation of the Secretary-General by videoconference.

38. The objective of the global observance was to demonstrate how the land degradation neutrality target could be a critical element for achieving other sustainable development goals, especially for the promotion of inclusive and sustainable economic growth. At the global observance, China unveiled an initiative to promote sustainable land management and land rehabilitation along the historic silk route.

39. In addition to the global observance, various events were organized by different groups around the world. As at the time of preparation of the present report, 61 events had been reported to the secretariat, from 48 countries. Further reports on the observance events are available from the secretariat's website.[6]

6. Partnerships

40. To follow up on the mandate of the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to explore options for the establishment of an independent land degradation neutrality fund, the Convention secretariat has been collaborating with a range of partners. The fund is, in principle, being structured as a public-private partnership for institutional investors, impact investors, development finance institutions and donors committed to supporting land degradation neutrality. A market potential study has been completed and a project pipeline is being developed.

41. The Convention secretariat has also been collaborating with the secretariats of the other Rio Conventions, particularly that of the UNFCCC, to advance recognition of the role of land as a potentially important carbon sink with the capacity to sequester important quantities of global emissions and a critical tool for adaptation. As a result, the land use sector is featured in more than 100 of the intended national determined contributions submitted for the twenty-first Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, as both a mitigation and an adaptation measure. Further, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has committed to produce a special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems, to be published in 2019. The report is expected to provide further scientific clarity on the role of land in climate change.

42. The secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification also collaborated with partners to facilitate the convening of the global summit of Heads of State and Government on the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative on the margins of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Climate Change. The summit was held in Paris on 2 December 2015 and was hosted by the President of France. It was also attended by the Secretary-General. The summit pledged $4 billion over the next five years to step up implementation of the Initiative, while the States involved committed to restoring more than 50 million hectares of land, which is expected to help sequester an estimated 250 million tons of carbon.

[6] See www.unccd.int/en/programmes/Event-and-campaigns/WDCD/wdcd2016/Pages/default.aspx.

43. The secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification has also been advancing collaboration with the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, particularly on issues related to ecosystems, including terrestrial restoration. Similarly, the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification has also been collaborating with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, which has announced that it would carry out a land degradation assessment in 2016 and 2017.

44. Another significant partnership is the Economics of Land Degradation Initiative study, undertaken over a period of four years, which quantifies the costs of land degradation and sets out a universal approach for quantifying the economic benefits of sustainable land management. It aims to enable decision makers to better understand the overall costs and benefits when implementing policies and actions dealing with land. It was launched at a special event with the European Commission and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany on 15 September 2015. One of the main findings of the report is that adopting sustainable land management could deliver up to $1.4 trillion in increased crop production.

45. The Convention secretariat is also working with a range of partners, from parties and United Nations entities to academic and civil society institutions to produce a global land outlook study. The global land outlook will be published in 2017 and is expected to present a new and transformative vision for land management policy, planning and practice at the global and national levels.

C. Observations and possible action by the General Assembly

46. The overarching goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is to "leave no one behind". More than a billion poor and hungry people live off severely degraded lands and have been left behind, despite the progress made under the Millennium Development Goals. Today, more than 2 billion people depend on just 500 million small-scale farms for their livelihoods, jobs, food, housing, education and more. The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals target on land degradation neutrality will help to preserve these farms and restore them where degraded. In turn, this will speed up the ability of land-dependent populations to reach other Sustainable Development Goal targets: food, water and energy supplies, the education of women and girls, poverty eradication and adaptation to climate change. In this respect, the General Assembly may wish to look at the target concerning land degradation as a Sustainable Development Goals accelerator, given the central role that land plays in achieving most of the Goals.

47. The General Assembly may wish to note the land degradation neutrality project, an initiative that, at this early stage of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is poised to engage Member States towards land degradation neutrality. Further, the Assembly may wish to encourage countries that have yet to do so to set land degradation neutrality targets. The Assembly may wish to provide support to this process by inviting donors and international organizations, including the organizations of the United Nations system, as well as international financial institutions, regional banks and the private sector to provide the necessary funding as appropriate.

III. Report of the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

A. Introduction

48. In its resolution 70/207, the General Assembly invited the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to report to it at its seventy-first session on the implementation of the Convention and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the difficulties encountered in the process of their implementation. The present report is submitted in response to that invitation.

B. Preparations for thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties

49. Since the issuance of the previous report to the General Assembly in August 2015, three meetings of the Bureau of the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity have been held — on 1 November 2015 in Montreal, Canada; on 21 February 2016 in Kuala Lumpur; and on 1 May 2016 in Montreal, Canada.

50. In preparation for the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, scheduled to be held in Cancun, Mexico, from 4 to 17 December 2016, a number of meetings, including of the subsidiary bodies of the Convention, have taken place.

1. First meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation

51. The first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation was held in Montreal, Canada, from 2 to 6 May 2016. The Subsidiary Body was established at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to replace the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group to Review Implementation of the Convention, with a mandate to undertake four major functions: review progress in implementation; identify strategic actions to enhance implementation; strengthen support for implementation; and improve the efficiency of structures and processes in the operations of the Convention and its Protocols. The Subsidiary Body also covers the two Protocols to the Convention, that is, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Nagoya Protocol) and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Cartagena Protocol).

52. On the issue of enhancing implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the Subsidiary Body, at its first meeting, recommended measures that could be taken by parties, including: updating national biodiversity strategies and action plans; mainstreaming biodiversity within and across sectors, with a particular focus on agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, and tourism; increasing the level of ambition of the national or regional targets, taking into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals; enhancing the use of economic valuation tools and environmental assessments; undertaking activities to enhance the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, subnational and local governments, and the business sector; and taking a more integrated and coherent approach to capacity-building and technical and scientific cooperation.

53. On the issue of synergies and cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions, the Subsidiary Body, examined the options for actions prepared by parties at a workshop convened in February 2016 and agreed to continue to work in close collaboration with the related secretariats of conventions to refine, consolidate and streamline options for action. The Executive Secretary will present the results of this collaborative work for consideration at the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

54. On resource mobilization, the Subsidiary Body reviewed the progress made in implementing the targets for resource mobilization adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting, based on the financial reports received from parties prior to the meeting, and urged parties that have not yet done so to complete their financial reports by 31 August 2016, in time for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth meeting. The meeting also recommended that those parties that have revised and updated their national biodiversity strategies and action plans could begin to identify their funding needs, gaps and priorities and to develop their national finance plans as a matter of priority.

55. On the financial mechanism, the Subsidiary Body reviewed the progress made by the expert team in preparing the report on a full assessment of the funds needed for the implementation of the Convention and its protocols for the seventh replenishment period of GEF, and urged recipient parties that have not done so to complete the questionnaire circulated by the expert team by 31 August 2016. The meeting also recommended that decisions be taken at the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the various aspects of the relationship between the Convention and GEF, including on a four-year framework for programme priorities for the seventh replenishment period, and on the fifth review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism.

56. On the issue of national reporting, the meeting recommended agreed guidelines for the preparation of the sixth national reports and called on parties to submit their sixth national report by 31 December 2018.

57. The first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation also examined the results of the third assessment and review of the effectiveness of the Cartagena Protocol and the midterm evaluation of the strategic plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (2011-2020) and made a number of recommendations to the eighth Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol. It also recommended prioritizing operational objectives relating to the development of biosafety legislation, risk assessment, detection and identification of living modified organisms, and public awareness, education and training.

58. The Subsidiary Body on Implementation also reviewed progress made towards reaching Aichi Biodiversity Target 16, which called for the Nagoya Protocol to enter into force and be operational, and noted that the first part of the Target has been successfully achieved with the entry into force of the Protocol on 12 October 2014. It also made recommendations on measures to enhance implementation of the Protocol.

2. Nineteenth and twentieth meetings of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice

59. The nineteenth and twentieth meetings of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice were held in Montreal, Canada, from 2 to 5 November 2015 and 25 to 30 April 2016 respectively. The two meetings prepared a number of recommendations on a range of issues, which will be forwarded to the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties for consideration.

60. Among the key outcomes of the nineteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice were the identification of measures for the further implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The meeting also considered the relationship between health and biodiversity and its implications for the implementation of the Convention, as well as its links to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. The meeting further examined the support of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and the Body's relationship with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and recommended actions aimed at increasing cooperation, avoiding duplication of efforts and making most of the scientific information available through both processes.

61. The twentieth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice examined implementation of Aichi Biodiversity Targets 11 (protected areas) and 12 (threatened species) and mainstreaming biodiversity across sectors, including agriculture, forests and fisheries, and recommended measures to enhance implementation. During the meeting, the Body also welcomed the first assessment of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services on pollinators (March 2016), adopted a recommendation noting the importance of pollinators and pollination and provided advice on the potential impacts of pesticides on pollinator populations and how to reduce such impacts. A number of issues related to marine biodiversity were also considered during the meeting, including further work related to ecologically and biologically significant marine areas, the adoption of a voluntary workplan on biodiversity in cold water areas and guidance for preventing and mitigating the impacts of marine debris. Recommendations were adopted on a short-term action plan to promote the restoration of natural and semi-natural ecosystems, as a contribution to halting biodiversity loss, improving ecosystem resilience, enhancing the provision of ecosystem services, mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change, combating desertification and land degradation and improving human well-being, while reducing environmental risks and scarcities.

62. The twentieth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice also considered ways and means to address the risks of biological invasion associated with trade in wildlife, including trade via e-commerce and the movement of sea containers, and called for the application of the precautionary approach and appropriate risk analysis when using classical biological control to manage already established invasive alien species. Other issues discussed included ecosystem-based approaches to climate change mitigation, indicators for assessing progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and synthetic biology. On synthetic biology, the meeting took note of an operational definition for the term.

3. Ninth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Inter-sessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and related provisions concerning traditional knowledge and customary sustainable use

63. The Ad Hoc Open-ended Inter-sessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and related provisions met from 4 to 7 November 2016, in Montreal, Canada, to review its programme of work and assess progress on the development of guidelines on mechanisms for obtaining prior informed consent of indigenous peoples and local communities for access to their knowledge, innovations and practices, for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of such knowledge and for reporting and preventing unlawful appropriation of traditional knowledge. The Working Group also recommended best practice guidelines for the repatriation of indigenous and traditional knowledge, in order to encourage cultural restoration and the restoration of knowledge systems, which will be considered at the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

4. Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity

64. As at 16 June 2016, the Nagoya Protocol had received 78 instruments of ratification, accession, approval or acceptance. Following the entry into force of the Protocol in October 2014, the focus of efforts has shifted to operationalization and implementation of the Protocol.

65. To prepare for the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol, which will take place concurrently with the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in Cancun, Mexico, from 4 to 17 December 2016, a number of intersessional meetings and activities have been convened: the first meeting of the Compliance Committee under the Protocol; an expert group meeting on article 10 of the Protocol; and meetings of the informal advisory committees on capacity-building and the Access and Benefit-Sharing Clearing-House. The outcomes of this work will be made available for the consideration of the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol.

66. A number of improvements have also been made to the Access and Benefit-Sharing Clearing-House. Furthermore, the first permits or their equivalents constituting internationally recognized certificates of compliance have been published in the Clearing-House. A number of capacity-building activities, including training modules, have also been organized.

5. Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity

67. As at 16 June 2016, the Cartagena Protocol had received 170 instruments of ratification, accession, approval or acceptance.

68. To prepare for the eighth meeting of the Conference of Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol, which will take place concurrently with the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties from 4 to 17 December 2016 in Cancun, Mexico, a number of meetings and activities have been organized. Of note among these was a capacity-building project undertaken on a pilot basis from October 2015 to May 2016 in over 22 countries. The outcome of the project

will be presented to the eighth meeting of the Conference of Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol.

69. A number of meetings of the Informal Advisory Committee to the Biosafety Clearing-House were also held and made a range of recommendations to the eighth meeting of the Conference of Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties designed to strengthen the Biosafety Clearing-House. Considerable work was also undertaken on the document entitled "Guidance on risk assessment of living modified organisms" on the basis of comments provided by parties, other Governments and relevant stakeholders, through a practical testing of the Guidance. An Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Risk Assessment and Risk Management has also been meeting on an intersessional basis, and a revised version of the Guidance is expected to be finalized for consideration by the eighth meeting.

70. Similarly, considerable work has been undertaken on an intersessional basis on the elements of a framework for conceptual clarity on socioeconomic considerations, which will be made available to the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties.

6. Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

71. The Nagoya-Kuala Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, which was adopted in 2010 at the fifth Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties, will enter into force on the ninetieth day after the date of deposit of the fortieth instrument of ratification, accession, acceptance or approval by the parties to the Cartagena Protocol. As at 16 June 2016, a total of 35 such instruments had been deposited.

C. Progress made in the implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and difficulties encountered in the process of implementation

72. The fourth edition of *Global Biodiversity Outlook* provided a midterm review of progress towards the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The report concluded that there had been encouraging progress towards meeting some elements of most Aichi Biodiversity Targets, but, in most cases, this progress would not be sufficient to achieve the Targets unless further urgent and effective action was taken to reduce the pressures on biodiversity and to prevent its continued decline. Since the publication of the fourth edition, additional information from updated and revised national biodiversity strategies and action plans, as well as additional fifth national reports, have been assessed. The information in these documents and other information reinforce that overall conclusion.

73. National biodiversity strategies and action plans are the principal instrument for implementing the Convention at the national level. Since 1993, 185 parties have developed at least one such strategy or action plan, while 11 parties have yet to submit their first. Since the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the majority of parties have initiated revisions of their national biodiversity strategies and action plans in response to decision X/2. A total of 67 parties met the 2015 deadline, and 12 others had submitted their national biodiversity strategies and action plans by 15 February 2016, for a total of 79. This represents approximately 40 per cent of the parties to the Convention.

74. The majority of national biodiversity strategies and action plans developed or revised since the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties contain targets related to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, although, for some Targets, such as Targets 3, 6, 10, 14 and 17, there were many national biodiversity strategies and action plans without associated national targets or commitments. Targets 1, 9, 11, 12, 16 and 19 are the Targets with the greatest number of broadly similar national targets or commitments. Overall, the majority of national targets and/or commitments contained in the national biodiversity strategies and action plans were lesser in scope and level of ambition than the Targets or did not address all of the elements of the Targets.

75. Information contained in 166 fifth national reports on the status of, trends in and pressures on biodiversity was used to determine overall progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. This information indicates that the majority of parties have made progress towards the Targets, albeit at a rate that is insufficient to allow the Targets to be met by the deadline of 2020 unless additional actions are taken. Overall, the assessment of information in the national reports indicates that between 64 and 87 per cent of parties are not on track to attain a given Aichi Biodiversity Target.

D. United Nations Decade on Biodiversity: International Day for Biological Diversity

76. The International Day for Biological Diversity was celebrated on 22 May 2016 under the overarching theme "Mainstreaming biodiversity; sustaining people and their livelihoods". A total of 62 parties held related celebrations, as did several organizations and United Nations entities.[7] Several high-level messages were also received on the occasion of the International Day. In his message on the occasion, the Secretary-General pointed out that biodiversity and the ecosystem services it supports are the foundations for life on Earth and the livelihoods and well-being of people everywhere. Protecting biodiversity and preventing further losses was an essential investment in our collective future. The Secretary-General pointed out that biodiversity was an important cross-cutting issue in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While Sustainable Development Goal 15 explicitly recognized the importance of halting biodiversity loss, other Goals recognized the importance of biological diversity for eradicating poverty, providing food and fresh water and improving life in cities. The Secretary-General emphasized that the responsible use of natural resources was essential for sustainable development and that mainstreaming biodiversity would ensure that efforts addressing development needs and protecting the environment were mutually supportive.

77. The Executive Secretary of the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in his message, indicated that the theme of the International Day for 2016 would also be the focus of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. He stressed that mainstreaming biodiversity considerations across sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry and aquaculture was essential in ensuring not only the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, but also the continued vitality of these sectors. The value of biodiversity for achieving economic and social goals had been recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the

[7] See www.cbd.int/idb/2016/celebrations for details.

Sustainable Development Goals, and implementation of the Goals would therefore also help countries to achieve the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.[8] The Convention on Biological Diversity footprint on social media also showed a marked increase during the celebrations on the International Day.

E. Recommendations

78. The General Assembly, at its seventy-first session, may wish to, inter alia:

(a) Call upon all parties to increase their efforts to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and to mainstream and integrate biodiversity in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals;

(b) Invite all parties and relevant United Nations departments, specialized agencies, funds, programmes and regional commissions to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity (2011-2020);

(c) Call upon all States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention on Biological Diversity;

(d) Call upon all parties to the Convention that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity;

(e) Call upon all parties to the Convention that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and its Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress.

[8] Other high-level statements are available from www.cbd.int/idb/2016/messages.